

Weekly Message from Fr William for Twenty-Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time 2021

Dear People of St Mary's,

In-church participation is growing, with 124 in church across the three Sunday masses last week.

I know that some parishioners feel that the covid measures and restrictions we are keeping in place are no longer necessary, such as ventilation and recommended face coverings. There is in fact a wide spectrum of views on this within the parish. Some will be wondering why we're still keeping these measures in place. Others are appreciative that we do. Some may have read on the website the measures we're keeping in place and felt sufficiently reassured to come back into church. Some parishioners I know do not yet feel safe to come back into church. And this could vary depending on what they see in church via livestream, or following a one-off visit, and how the recommendations are being followed. Some have told me that they are back in church, but only just, and still do not feel entirely sure that it is sufficiently covid safe. Across this spectrum of views we can't know for certain who is right about how safe it actually is.

My role in this is to provide an environment where everybody not only feels safe but actually is safe, or as safe as is reasonably possible, by keeping in place measures that are both effective and reasonable.

Two weeks ago we had a positive case of coronavirus at the Sunday 10am mass, reported to me afterwards. Because of the measures and restrictions we have in place, Health and Safety recommended no need for further action.

The list of measures is still accessible from the website homepage. Just click on the link 'celebrating mass by in-church participation' – updated 25th July 2021.

The only change to this since then is that we've now opened the hall for refreshments after the Sunday 10am Mass, providing an alternative to outside for socialising. Covid measures are in place, including table service, paper cups and plates, through ventilation, no cash handling. Feel free to take face covering off once seated.

If you feel some of these measures are no longer necessary, worry not! I will be consulting and reviewing in due course, as I have done throughout the pandemic. Meantime, please help me to keep everyone safe.



Twenty-Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time, 26th September 2021